

# Edenderry News

June 06

**FREE**

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## The Battle of the Somme 9th Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers

**Following** our very successful talk in march 2005 and as we approach the ninth anniversary of the Battle of the Somme Amanda Moreno Curator of the Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum, Sovereign's House, Armagh will be giving another Power Point illustrated talk, this time on 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers in the Great War and the roll the Regiment played in the Battle of the Somme on the first of July 1916.

There will be a display of Great War memorabilia and if you have any family medals, badges, pay books or other military items relating to Royal Irish Fusiliers or the Great War please bring them along on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> June at 8.00pm to Edenderry Orange Hall and Amanda will be pleased to identify them for you.

Admission is £2.00 including tea and biscuits. ►

## MAJOR WADE EVENT FOR PORTADOWN

**Edenderry** Cultural & Historical Society (ECHS) in Portadown have been successful in obtaining major funding of £43k to research the history of the former Wade Pottery factory in Portadown.

Following a highly successful promotional exhibition in High Street Mall last June the Historical Society applied and was granted funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Research work has now started and anyone who wishes to contribute to the project should contact either Cardwell McClure at 028 38333988 or Harry Eakin 028 38350087. There is also information available on the Wade website [www.wadeireland.co.uk](http://www.wadeireland.co.uk)

Details of the Wade Ireland exhibition have just been released and the Millennium Court Arts Centre in Portadown have agreed to stage the

event for 2 months starting in August next year. Megan Johnston, manager of the Millennium Court Arts Centre, said that she was delighted to host the event and believed the exhibition would attract large numbers of visitors.



Harry Eakin and Cardwell McClure with a Wade Pig

## MAJOR WADE EVENT FOR PORTADOWN

Wade is the most collectable item in the world to-day and demand for the products is phenomenal said Harry Eakin a Senior Wade Researcher for the project. "It is estimate that there are 15,000 Wade collectors worldwide and interest in the exhibition has been expressed from as far afield as Canada, America, Australia, as well as the United Kingdom and Ireland. The Edenderry Historical Society have already received numerous enquiries from these counties and expect to attract a good number of foreign visitors to visit the town during the exhibition.

As part of the project Edenderry Cultural and Historical Society are to publish a book on the history of the factory it will include a reference section of products manufactured in the Portadown factory and a list of all known employees. The books will be distributed worldwide through the internet but 500 copies will be available during the exhibition for the local market at a nominal price.

The Wade factory was opened in Watson Street in 1947 in Armstrong's old Linen Mill which served as an ordnance factory during WWII. The Wade factory initially made products such as insulators for the telephone and electricity industry but in 1953 with the

coronation of Queen Elizabeth giftware products were produced. The giftware proved to be an outstanding success and items such as Nat West Pig moneyboxes and the small Whimsies made Wade famous throughout the world. Irish Wade made in Portadown has a distinctive blue/green colour and was discovered by accident but proved to be a winner for the factory.

Mr Cardwell McClure, senior Wade researcher said that they are gathering and recording information on the products, history and employees from across the town. The

Edenderry Cultural and Historical Society see the event as great opportunity to put Portadown on the tourist map. The Northern Ireland Tourist Board fully support the project.

The society has obtained support from the Mayor of Craigavon and Mr David Simpson the MP for the area. The people of Portadown are proud of its Wade history and local people such as James Borse Sr and his son James Borse Jn played a significant part as designers in the factory. Many fine Wade pieces bare their signature along with William Harper, D. S. Nelson and Raymond Piper. ♦

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## The Battle of the Somme 1 July 1916

**This year marks the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. Local historian James Kane gives us a brief outline of the battle and the glorious exploits of the 9<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Fusiliers.**

The date set for the attack was to be the morning of 1 July. To the men of the 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division, which had been raised from the Ulster Volunteer Force, this was an auspicious date as it was the original anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne.

Preparations for the offensive had begun on 24 June when heavy artillery began to shell the enemy defences. This bombardment went on intermittently for seven days and was heard as far away as London.

Despite all the intensive planning, training, the massive artillery bombardment and high morale of the troops the battle of the Somme was a disaster of monumental proportions. The German deep dugouts had not been destroyed, German troops had not been demoralised and the barbed wire had not been cut in enough places. As a result the advancing British infantry was met with a hail of machine gun fire, fired from emplacements manned by German infantry which had escaped the effects of the bombardment.

By the end of the first day of the British losses were in the region of 19,000 killed, 2,000 missing, 35,000 wounded and 600 prisoners of war. Total casualties of 57,500 in a single day - by far the worst losses suffered by the British Army in its entire history.

The 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division suffered over 5,500 casualties of which over 1,900 lay dead or dying on the battlefield.

### **9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Irish Fusiliers**

The 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart Blacker, was formed from the Armagh, Monaghan and Cavan Volunteers of the Ulster Volunteer Force. It formed part of the 108<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade of the 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division.

On 1 July it attacked north of the River Ancre, one of the objectives being Beaucourt Railway Station. From right to left the battalion advanced as follows 'A' Company (Captain Ensor) on the extreme right nearest the River Ancre; 'B' Company (Major Atkinson) right centre; 'C' Company (Captain Johnston) left centre and 'D' Company (Captain Brew) on the left flank.

As the men advanced they came under a hail of machine gun fire, which mercilessly cut them down leaving hundreds of dead and wounded in no man's land. Despite this murderous fire, small pockets of soldiers managed to penetrate the German lines and some even reached the battalion objective of Beaucourt Railway Station. Casualties were 14 officers and 518 other ranks killed, wounded or missing.

Lieutenant Geoffrey St. George Shillington Cather repeatedly ventured out into no man's land to rescue injured men. He was killed in action on 2 July while trying to rescue a wounded soldier. He was subsequently awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross.

From 1 July-17 July 1916 a total of 70 soldiers from Portadown were killed or died of wounds received in action during the Battle of the Somme. Please remember their sacrifice.

## Heroes of Edenderry

In this column James Kane will be focusing on the heroes of Edenderry who left all that was dear to fight for King and Country and the defence of freedom during the two World Wars. In this issue we pay tribute to Major Atkinson who made the supreme sacrifice.

### Major Thomas Joyce Atkinson

Killed in Action 1 July 1916, at the Battle of the Somme

Thomas Joyce Atkinson was a member of the well-known Atkinson family of Eden Villa, Bachelor's Walk in Edenderry. He was born in 1878 and graduated from Trinity College, Dublin in 1898. He was a partner in the firm of Messrs Carleton, Atkinson and Sloan, Solicitors, Church Place, Portadown.

Thomas organised the signing of the Ulster Covenant in Seagoe Parish Church on Ulster Day 28 September 1912. He also played a prominent role in the Ulster Volunteer Force and was second in command to Major Stewart Blacker, commanding officer, of the Portadown Battalion, UVF.

On the outbreak of war he gained a commission in the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Irish Fusiliers rising to the rank of Major. He was Adjutant to Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart Blacker.

In the attack of the 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division on 1 July 1916 Major Thomas Joyce Atkinson was in command of 'B' Company, which was positioned on the right centre of the battalion advance. Major Atkinson's company penetrated three Germans lines and a small body of men reached Beaucourt Station but were unable to hold the position due to a lack of support.

Major Thomas Joyce Atkinson was killed in action on 1 July and lies buried in Ancre British Cemetery, Beaumont Hamel. On his headstone are the words

*A son of Ulster  
Your memory hallowed  
In the land you loved.*

*James S. Kane* ♦

Edenderry Community Development Association **WEBSITE** [www.edenderry.co.uk](http://www.edenderry.co.uk) continues to expand and to date there have been over 3500 hits with contacts from Australia, Canada and England. We continue to develop our Website and items and photographs are being added daily. The site also contains information on all our activities, contacts, and comments page, photographs, stories, links to other useful sites and of course this newsletter and back copies.

Edenderry Cultural and Historical Society **Wade** website at [www.wadeireland.co.uk](http://www.wadeireland.co.uk) continues to expand to date there have been over 6500 hits from all over the world. Both these sites are well worth a visit.

## Edenderry Business and Residents Association

The Group have been working steadily from the last newsheet. The PSNI gave the residents a talk on how to introduce a neighbourhood watch scheme and although numbers were disappointing, those who were at the meeting in Edenderry Presbyterian Church found the event informative. We would like to thank the Church officers for granting us the use of their halls.

Mrs. Diane Hunniford from Portadown 2000 addressed the committee. The meeting was very constructive and Mrs. Hunniford updated us on the various schemes and works proposed for Edenderry in the near future. The overhead electric distribution cables and poles

are to be placed underground and a new lighting scheme sympathetic to the area and those on the new bridge, are to be installed. A new road surface is to be laid from the bridge to Edenderry square and the pavements will also be upgraded. The road at Seagoe traffic lights is also to be re-surfaced.

We are about to take a summer break to re-charge our batteries for what we anticipate to be a busy autumn session. If anyone feels that they can contribute to our group or would like us look at problems in the area please get in touch. We are always looking for new members to help us. ♦

**The Edenderry Historical Group** met each Monday night in Edenderry Orange Hall to record memories and anecdotes of 30's/70's. The evenings were well attended by ex-residents who are keen to see that the history of the area is recorded, much of the material is now available on our website [www.edenderry.co.uk](http://www.edenderry.co.uk) If you have any old photos or stories please join us when we resume again on Monday nights in September when we can assure you of a laugh. You will be made most welcome. ♦

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## EDEN-TOTS.



### Edenderry Parent & Toddlers Group

Eden-Tots are coming to the end of another successful year. Party time again soon as we break-up for the summer months!!!! We would like to thank everyone, Mums, Dads, Grandparents and Carers, for their support during the year. Thanks also to Maxine and Beryl who look after our refreshments. Special thanks go to all those businesses in Edenderry who have helped us, including, **Vehicle Clean Car Wash** and the **BP Filling Station** both on Bridge Street and **Lunney's Electrical**, Carrickblacker Road.

Finally we would like to pass our good wishes on to all the children moving to Nursery or Primary Education. Best wishes in your new schools!!

Look out for news on important new projects due to start in September.♦

## DEMISE OF ONE OF PORTADOWN'S OLDEST COMMUNITY GROUPS

We are sorry to report that one of Portadown's oldest groups has ceased to exist. Twelve members of Portadown Housewives League met in Portadown Town Hall last month to hold their final meeting and wind up the group. The members decided that due to falling attendances at the meetings they had no option but to close down.

Portadown Housewives League was formed in 1964 as a pressure group to fight for housewives rights and in the sixties there were groups in almost every town in Northern Ireland. The Portadown Group were the last Housewives League in the Province.

The first meeting was held in Woodwin. Café Woodhouse Street where the proprietor Mrs. H Irwin took a keen interest, Hilda Haunt was president of the Housewives League Groups which were the forerunner for the Consumer Council

The members attended a final outing this week and the group included two founder members Mrs Lyda Waugh, Mrs. May Hall. Mrs Edna Hunniford is also

a founder member who due to illness was unable to be at the final outing.



Two founder members Mrs Lyda Waugh, Mrs. May Hall.

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## ECDA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The second annual general meeting of Edenderry Community Development Association took place on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April in Edenderry Orange Hall and there was a good attendance of interested residents. The chair was taken by Mrs Shirley Branayn who welcomed all present especially The Mayor of Craigavon Councillor George Savage.

Reports were given by Edenderry Community Development Association, Edenderry Cultural and Historical Society, Edenderry and Residents Association, EdenTots Mums and Toddlers and the Wade Project.

The Mayor Councillor George Savage then took the chair for the election the committees of Edenderry Community Development Association and Edenderry Cultural and Historical Society and both committees were unanimously re-elected, Councillor Savage said Edenderry had a good product and the accounts were a credit to the treasurers, he congratulated all the groups on their efforts, hoped they would continue to



flourish and assured them of his personal and Craigavon Borough Council's support in the future. Councillor Ronnie Harkness congratulated the two committees on their re-election and on the excellent progress the groups had made in such a short time, he said the evening had been an education to him on the work community carry out and how they operate.

**FREE**

# The Battle of the Somme

and the

## 9th Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers

**Amanda Mareno**

**Curator of the Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum**

Will give an illustrated talk in

**EDENDERRY ORANGE HALL**

**8.00PM, THURSDAY 15TH JUNE 2006**

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